



# The League of Women Voters of the Kearsarge Sunapee Area

---

December 2022

*Empowering Voters - Defending Democracy*

---

## President's Message

Dear League Members and Friends:

Welcome to the third issue of our newsletter. The League has been active during this busy election season. We have worked hard to ensure that voters were informed on the issues and had the opportunity to meet their local candidates in open and impartial forums.

Our state president, Liz Tentarelli, conducted ten forums around the state. Here in our Kearsarge-Sunapee area, we held a forum with candidates for what may be the most important group in New Hampshire government, the Executive Council. We distributed information about this five-person group which controls contracts, spending, and structural policy. All candidates running for the District 2 seat attended as well as 75 members of the public. In addition, we held a forum for the House seat in New London-Newbury. Both forums were videotaped and later shown on Yankee Cable Network.

The organization of these and other events, the publicity, and the printing and distribution of informational brochures is all made possible by your dues, contributions, and participation. You can be proud of your part in our success.

### Patricia Rodgers

President of LWVKS chapter - patrodgers2000@yahoo.com

---

## District 2 Executive Council Forum held in New London - 09/06/22

"Great forum and what a turnout!" "I really didn't know much about what the Executive Council does; now I do." These were just a couple of the responses received following the Executive Council Candidates' Forum held in New London on September 6th in preparation for the September 13th Primary. Approximately 75 people turned out to hear from five candidates running for a seat to represent District 2, which includes 49 towns and cities or approximately one-fifth of our state's population.

As people entered, they were given a handout about our unique NH Executive Council. The formation of the Council began back in 1679 when King Charles II of England appointed a Council of men to keep him abreast of the activities of the Governor.

**Continued on next page...**

## **District 2 Executive Council Forum Continued**

When the NH Constitution was written, the Council remained as a check and balance on the role of the Governor. This handout also listed the duties and responsibilities of the Council including reviewing and approving nominations by the Governor, approving expenditures and contracts over \$10,000, oversight of our State's 10-year highway plan, and ensuring that major executive branch business is conducted in public. This handout provided a quick reference for new and seasoned voters about the power and importance that our five-member Council represents.

Moderator Liz Tentarelli, President of LWVNH, opened the 90-minute forum by introducing the candidates: Michael Cryans, Harold French, Joanne Martin, Kim Strathdee, and Cinde Warmington. A sixth candidate, Bradford Todd, was invited but failed to respond. Following opening statements by the candidates, the moderator then began posing questions to either a particular candidate, as deemed by the question, or the same question to be answered by all of the candidates. As always, a timekeeper was in place to ensure equal time for all. Some questions focused on both national and NH's concerns such as energy costs, reproductive issues, and ensuring equal and fair voter rights but NH's citizens also raised issues about public education funding and choices, affordable housing, public transportation, and expenditure of federal funds during the pandemic.

We thank all those who took the time and the interest to attend the forum and hope to see you again as we prepare for our town and school board elections in March of 2023.

### **Sara McNeil**

LWVKS Board member

---

## **Candidates Forum for Merrimack House District**

On October 18th, the Kearsarge Sunapee League sponsored a candidates' forum for Merrimack House District 7. All candidates participated: Karen Ebel, Democratic incumbent; Dan Wolf, Republican incumbent; and two challengers, Claire Ketteler, Republican; and Greg Sargent, Democrat.

Four key issues took priority:

1. Education, particularly the voucher program, was of concern because it promoted inequality and is draining needed funds from the public schools. Ebel, Wolf, and Sargent wanted to see vouchers restricted; Ketteler did not.
2. The NH "divisive concepts" law restricts subject matter allowed in classrooms: Ebel, Wolf, and Sargent wanted to see the law eliminated; Ketteler did not.
3. Abortion rights: Ebel, Wolf, and Sargent favored repealing the recent NH law; Ketteler did not.
4. The need for state financial support for affordable housing: Ebel, Wolf, and Sargent agreed with the need for additional monetary support and Ketteler did not.

### **Deborah Hall**

LWVKS Board member

## Civic Responsibilities

Wikipedia says that civic responsibilities include paying taxes, obeying laws, serving as a witness, jury duty, voting, and volunteering. Google takes a different direction. "Civic responsibility means active participation in the public life of a community in an informed, committed, and constructive manner with a focus on the common good." It goes further to define five responsibilities: voting, staying informed, community involvement, practicing tolerance, and then passing it on to others.

The League of Women Voters of the Kearsarge Sunapee area concentrates on helping our community to stay informed, which in my mind covers the rest of the responsibilities. Conducting open-format Candidate Forums in an orderly and respectful manner enables citizens to learn about the beliefs of those running, thereby empowering them to make responsible decisions at the ballot box.

Holding issue forums over the years has kept the public informed of local and state topics of interest. In recent years, we have hosted top-notch speakers who discussed civics education in our high schools, statewide redistricting, the role of public education in our democracy, the Electoral College, and the NH Drug Court, among others.

As a nonpartisan organization, we are always open to new ideas and ways of thinking from every sector of the population while also encouraging dialogue. How could you not want to become a member of such an organization? If all this sounds like a pitch for becoming a member of your local LWV, then I guess it is. Think about it!

### Janet Miller Haines

LWVKS Board member

---

## LWVKS Member Application

These newsletters are sent to LWV/KS members and are also distributed at events and passed on to others. If you are not yet a member and would like to join the League, please complete this form and mail it to: LWV/KS, Box 660, New London, NH 03257

### Annual Dues: \$50. Family Membership: \$60.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Family member \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$50.

Family \_\_\_\_\_ \$60.

Additional contribution \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues include membership in the National Organization, LWVUS.

## Update on Education Matters

Much has happened since the League published its full-page ad supporting NH public schools on August 28th in the Union Leader, Concord Monitor, and Valley News. The feedback we received was swift and positive. Hopefully, the ad inspired voters to thoughtfully consider candidates' positions on education.

At a November 30th meeting of over twenty public school supporters, concern was high that many problematic educational bills, at least 100 out of about 615, have been submitted.

Of critical concern, and largely out of public view, is the current review of the 306 Rules which govern the certification of NH public schools. The NH Department of Education hired a private consulting firm to oversee this required review and recommend revisions.

The firm, known as the National Center for Competency-Based Education, a 501c3 corporation, is owned by Fred Bramante, a former State Board of Education Chair. The NCCBE website states that his firm's vision is the "coordinating of an effort along with NH School Administrators to redefine what it means to be 'ready' to successfully complete high school with a new vision that says, 'by 2023, virtually every NH high school student will earn, or be on a personalized path to earning, a post-secondary or career-related credential.'" This vision supports the educational philosophy of the School Voucher and *Learn Everywhere* programs championed by Commissioner Frank Edelblut and the State Board of Education.

To date, the 306 review process has taken place without public participation even though the results of this review will impact every public school in our state.

On November 16th the LWWNH sponsored a Zoom program, *Supporting our Public Schools*, which featured Michael Turmelle of the NH Charitable Foundation, and Christina Pretorius, Policy Director of Reaching Higher NH. Michael shared the NHCF's perspective on education and a critical appraisal of how the consequences of current NH Department of Education policies are impacting that vision. Christina provided essential data regarding how NH public schools are being affected by current Department of Education policies, insights into the 306 revision process, as well as the following resources, to better understand what is happening to our public schools:

- RHNH's webinar on the revisions to the Minimum Standards for Public School Approval
- *Together We Thrive*, the NH Charitable Foundation's new strategic plan

You can watch a recording of the Nov. 16 webinar at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v+SV1rJPVQe4A>

### Janet Ward

LWWNH Board member

## Did you know?

Every three years, the NH Department of Education releases a report card entitled *Comprehensive Support & Improvement Schools*.

On November 10th, they released their 2022 list of the lowest-performing high schools in the state. Of note, eight out of ten of these schools are Charter Schools:

- Next Charter School\*
- SCI Charter School\*
- Kreiva Academy
- Ledyard Charter School
- Making Community Connections (Monadnock)\*
- Manchester West High School\*
- North Country Charter Academy
- Pittsfield High School
- Bud Carlson Academy\*
- Virtual Learning Academy

\* These schools were also identified as CSI schools in 2018.

Reaching Higher NH, a non-profit public education policy resource for parents, educators, and elected officials states the following:

“The state’s school voucher program will cost taxpayers \$14.7 million in 2022. In total, NH will have spent 23 million in school vouchers in the past two years and 77% of public funds are going to students who were already enrolled in private schools or homeschooled.

[reachinghighernh.org](http://reachinghighernh.org)

**For newsletter suggestions or comments  
The newsletter is now available on the  
state website, [lwvnh.org](http://lwvnh.org)**

**Sara McNeil** - Editor  
[saramcneil59@gmail.com](mailto:saramcneil59@gmail.com)

**Marie Rossachacj** - Asst. Editor  
[mariercj@msn.com](mailto:mariercj@msn.com)

**Pat Tivnan** - Asst. Editor  
[pattivnan64@gmail.com](mailto:pattivnan64@gmail.com)

## Become a League Moderator!

As requests for Candidate Forums continue to increase around the state, we currently need people interested in becoming moderators. We will provide training in all aspects of running a forum according to League rules including handling the candidates and the audience while providing an impartial and fair hearing that is our hallmark. For more information, please contact our LWVNH president, Liz Tentarelli, at [LWV@kenliz.net](mailto:LWV@kenliz.net).

## In Memoriam

**Mary Louise Dufault**

**05/09/1937 - 10/16/2022**

On October 16, 2022, Mary Louise Dufault, a longtime New London resident passed away with her family at her side. Mary Lou remained an active member of the community right up until the time of her passing. She and her husband, Larry, founded their own law firm, Dufault & Dufault. Among her many activities, she was also a long-time Board member of the League of Women Voters of the Kearsarge Sunapee area. Mary Lou will be missed by many.

## LWVKS Board of Directors

**Patricia Rodgers** - New London - President  
**Nancy Marashio** - New London - Vice President  
**Katharine Fischer** - New London - Treasurer  
**Pat Tivnan** - Sutton - Secretary  
**Janet Miller Haines** - New London - Membership  
**Sara McNeil** - Warner - Publicity  
**Dianne Bischoff** - Warner  
**Debbie Hall** - New London  
**Marie Rossachacj** - New London  
**Cheryl Weinstein** - New London



### **District 2 Executive Council Forum**

From L to R: Moderator Liz Tentarelli, Michael Cryans, Harold French, Joanne Martin, Kim Strathdee, Cinde Warmington

Newsletter Layout by Emma Bates [www.emmaleebates.com](http://www.emmaleebates.com)  
[emmabatesvac@gmail.com](mailto:emmabatesvac@gmail.com)



### **Candidates Forum for Merrimack House District**

From L to R: Moderator Patricia Rodgers, Dan Wolf, Karen Ebel, Claire Ketteler, Greg Sargent

## **League of Women Voters**

of the Kearsarge/Sunapee Area

P.O. Box 660

New London, NH 03257

[www.LWVNH.org](http://www.LWVNH.org)